

Movement in the 1950s, the University of North Texas took a giant step forward by opening its doors to African-American students. And it is only appropriate, that during February, Black History Month, that UNT celebrates their own turning point in history with the 50 Years of Progress and Opportunity, 1954–2004 culminating in a celebration on Saturday, February 14, 2004.

In 2004, the UNT is commemorating its desegregation as well as the incredible progress made in during those 50 years. I congratulate the African-Americans who overcame barriers to pave the way for others at the University of North Texas. I also applaud the university's former and current African-American students, faculty and staff for their continued dedication to the Mean Green of UNT.

SUPPORTING TAIWAN

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 6, 2004

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support Taiwan, a democracy and a dependable friend of the United States. In fact, the United States is Taiwan's largest trading partner, while Taiwan is the seventh largest United States trading partner. In the year 2000, total U.S.-Taiwan trade was approximately \$65 billion, with a Taiwan surplus of approximately \$16 billion. Taiwan's chief exports to the United States include clothing and footwear, toys, and various electronic products. In recent years, Taiwanese government officials have attempted to accommodate increased United States pressure on trade issues. They met many U.S. demands for greater market access for U.S. goods and services and responded to U.S. complaints by taking stronger measures to protect U.S. copyrights and other intellectual property rights.

At the same time, Taiwan's political system had undergone dramatic changes, including a transition to democratic political pluralism. The combination of these developments led to subtle changes in U.S.-Taiwan ties, including

deepening economic, military, social, and other contacts. Today, the United States is an important investor and trading partner for Taiwan, with United States markets receiving about 25 percent of Taiwan's exports. Taiwan continues to enjoy Export-Import Bank financing, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) guarantees, most-favored-nation status, and ready access to U.S. markets.

Beijing regards Taiwan as a renegade province of China, and PRC officials have grown particularly upset over the statements and positions taken by Taiwan's democratically elected president, Chen Shui-bian, who increasingly has referred to Taiwan as a sovereign independent country. These statements and positions have contributed to an intense domestic debate in Taiwan over its national status. President Chen also has been a strident proponent of using the scheduled March 20, 2004 presidential elections to hold an unprecedented national referendum on several policy issues. Beijing strongly opposes a referendum in Taiwan, fearing it could be used to gauge support for—and possibly to declare—Taiwan independence.

In recent years, the PRC has steadily increased its missile build-up along the south China coast opposite Taiwan, now deploying close to 500 missiles. As Taiwan faces military threats from China, the people of Taiwan plan to express concern over their wellbeing and security in a proposed referendum on March 20, 2004. Therefore, as the world's leading democracy, we must support the people of Taiwan and their right to hold this referendum.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA WEST

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 6, 2004

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you and my colleagues a tribute to a lady from southwestern Pennsylvania who has made a difference in the lives of countless veterans.

When Linda West was in junior high school in Uniontown, in Pennsylvania's 12th Congress-

sional District, she began visiting the homes of housebound veterans as part of a community-service project. This effort marked the beginning of a mission that would lead a coalition of veterans and community organizations in Las Vegas, NV, to honor her with a Lifetime Achievement Award last December.

As a student at the University of Cincinnati, Linda worked with veterans in Uniontown during semester and summer breaks. After graduation, she relocated to Las Vegas and formed new relationships with veterans there to match those she had found so rewarding in Uniontown. She visited veterans in hospitals, delivered food to their homes, assisted with burials and arranged honor guards. In recognition of her efforts, the Chapel of Four Chaplains more than 20 years ago confirmed her as an assistant Nevada State chaplain, the first female lay clergy in the organization. She receives no pay or reimbursement for expenses.

She is a national service officer of Veterans of the Vietnam War, where she has helped veterans with their medical, spiritual and health-care benefits needs for more than 15 years. When necessary, she has practiced suicide intervention with these veterans, especially those suffering from the effects of Agent Orange.

She worked with a Vietnam veteran to ensure passage of the first increase in Nevada's veterans' property tax exemption in the 48 years since the bill was passed in 1953. The legislation, including added benefits for veterans who were more than 60 percent disabled as a result of their service, was intended as a thank-you to the State's veterans but had become nearly meaningless over the years.

She also worked with a veteran to derail legislation that would have ended the teaching of American Government and history in Nevada's public schools, instead adding a mandate for the teaching of the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence.

Here in the 12th Congressional District, we're grateful to Uniontown native Linda West Myers for the generous contributions she has made to our Nation's veterans.